

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing build of material information in a computer system, comprising:
identifying build of material information in a source file of the computer system;
encoding a file marker with the build of material information from the source file;
and
storing the file marker in a physical storage location.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending the file marker to a central authority when an application abnormally terminates.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the file marker comprises a null file with a file name.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the build of material information is encoded in the file name of the file marker.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the file name is populated with information from a SMBIOS table.
6. The method of claim 3, wherein the file name ranges from 1 to 256 characters.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the file marker is provided within a physical storage medium.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein the physical storage medium comprises a disk drive.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the build of material information is selected from the group consisting of device drivers, software applications, operating systems, or BIOS versions.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the central authority is selected from the group consisting of a server, a managing computer, a network administrator, a technical assistance center, or an automated calling center.

11. A method for providing build of material information in a computer system, comprising:
receiving a source file into the computer system;
identifying build of material information in the source file;
encoding a file marker with the build of material information from the source file;
and
storing the file marker in a physical storage location.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein the receiving of the file is by a download from a computer readable medium.
13. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of sending the file marker to a central authority when an application abnormally terminates.
14. The method of claim 11, wherein the file marker comprises a null file with a file name.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein the build of material information is encoded in the file name of the file marker.
16. The method of claim 14, wherein the file name is populated with information from a SMBIOS table.
17. The method of claim 14, wherein the file name ranges from 1 to 256 characters.
18. The method of claim 11, wherein the file marker is provided within a physical storage medium.
19. The method of claim 18, wherein the physical storage medium comprises a disk

drive.

20. The method of claim 11, wherein the build of material information is selected from the group consisting of device drivers, software applications, operating systems, or BIOS versions.
21. The method of claim 11, wherein the central authority is selected from the group consisting of a server, a managing computer, a network administrator, a technical assistance center, or an automated calling center.

22. A method of providing build of material information during a software failure, comprising:
encoding a file marker with build of material information from a source file; and
sending the file marker to a central authority when an application abnormally terminates.
23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of storing the file marker in a physical storage location.
24. The method of claim 22, wherein the file marker comprises a null file with a file name.
25. The method of claim 24, wherein the build of material information is encoded in the file name of the file marker.
26. The method of claim 24, wherein the file name is populated with information from a SMBIOS table.
27. The method of claim 24, wherein the file name ranges from 1 to 256 characters.
28. The method of claim 22, wherein the file marker is provided within a physical storage medium.
29. The method of claim 28, wherein the physical storage medium comprises a disk drive.
30. The method of claim 22, wherein the build of material information is selected from the group consisting of device drivers, software applications, operating systems, or BIOS versions.

31. The method of claim 22, wherein the central authority is selected from the group consisting of a server, a managing computer, a network administrator, a technical assistance center, or an automated calling center.

32. A signal tangibly embodying a computer readable medium for providing build of material information, comprising:
 - a first command for identifying build of material information in a source file;
 - a second command for encoding a file marker with the build of material information from the source file; and
 - a third command for storing the file marker in a physical storage location.
33. The signal of claim 32, further comprising a fourth command for sending the file marker to a central authority during a software application failure.
34. The signal of claim 32, wherein the build of material information is read from a SMBIOS interface.
35. The signal of claim 32, wherein the file marker comprises a null file with a file name.
36. The signal of claim 35, wherein the build of material information is encoded in the file name of the file marker.
37. The signal of claim 35, wherein the file name is populated with information from a SMBIOS table.
38. The signal of claim 35, wherein the file name ranges from 1 to 256 characters.
39. The signal of claim 32, wherein the file marker is stored within a physical storage medium.
40. The signal of claim 39, wherein the physical storage medium is a disk drive.

41. The signal of claim 32, wherein the build of material information is selected from the group consisting of device drivers, software applications, operating systems, or BIOS versions.
42. The signal of claim 32, wherein the central authority is selected from the group consisting of a server, a managing computer, a network administrator, a technical assistance center, or an automated calling center.

43. A computer system for providing build of material information during a software failure, comprising:
- a processor;
 - a memory coupled with the processor;
 - a signal, executable by the processor, wherein the signal further comprises, a means for generating a file marker and encoding the file marker with build of material information from a source file;
 - a communication assembly coupled with the processor, the communication assembly for sending the file marker to a central authority when an application abnormally terminates,
 - wherein the central authority may use the file markers in failure analysis, system restoration, and for future use in identifying and diagnosing technical support issues.
44. The computer system of claim 43, wherein the build of material information is read from a SMBIOS interface.
45. The computer system of claim 43, wherein the file marker comprises a null file with a file name.
46. The computer system of claim 45, wherein the build of material information is encoded in the file name of the file marker.
47. The computer system of claim 45, wherein the file name is populated with information from a SMBIOS table.
48. The computer system of claim 45, wherein the file name ranges from 1 to 256 characters.
49. The computer system of claim 43, wherein the file marker is provided within a

physical storage medium.

50. The computer system of claim 49, wherein the physical storage medium is a disk drive.
51. The computer system of claim 43, wherein the build of material information is selected from the group consisting of device drivers, software applications, operating systems, or BIOS versions.
52. The computer system of claim 43, wherein the central authority is selected from the group consisting of a server, a managing computer, a network administrator, a technical assistance center, or an automated calling center.

53. A means for providing build of material information during a software failure, comprising:
means for encoding a file marker with build of material information from a source file; and
means for sending the file marker when an application abnormally terminates.
54. The means of claim 53, wherein the file marker comprises a null file with a file name, the file name being encoded with the build of material information.
55. The means of claim 53, wherein the file marker is sent to a central authority when an application abnormally terminates.